

February 27, 2014

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak and the esteemed members of the committee,

I sit before you today in reference to raised bill Number 219. I find it unconscionable that we are even at a point where we are debating adding more financial burdens on to the backs of public employees due to no fault of their own. The municipalities that have chosen to participate in M.E.R.S. have done so willingly, fully aware of the funding mechanism and responsibilities for years. They have enjoyed the savings of the G.A.S.B. obligations and associated costs of not having to maintain a municipal pension fund, while at the same time using any increases in the municipal contribution rate as negative cash flow in negotiations with municipal unions in the ability to pay argument. What this bill does is pass more financial burden onto the employees with no justification other than times are bad and we can't afford this, failing to mention all the savings they have enjoyed. What the municipalities are basically saying is we would like to save more and do it on the backs of our employees. If their employees have less today and don't have a decent retirement income, how will they contribute to the economic viability of the communities they live in today and in the future? This is a short sighted bill with nothing to back it up. Yes it does cost money to fund pensions. Yes the employees have taken less today to have a secure future. Many national studies have shown that Public Sector employee's compensation is lower even with the pension and employee benefits. Why would we now in these times wish to further the damage of the economic downturn of our state, at the same time we are raising minimum wage this bill takes away from the gains that were justly negotiated. I urge the members of this committee to stand with our members in opposition to this bill.

Thank you for time,

Vincent Fusco

Chairman, Legislative Committee, U.P.F.F.A

President, Hartford Fire Fighters Assoc, IAFF 760